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# Living by love

Street Pastors, care and public safety in Cardiff's night-time economy

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## Foreword

This report is the fruit of a sabbatical leave. My family and I spent the summer of 2014 in Cardiff, Wales, for work and a holiday. Both objectives were achieved to the satisfaction of all, even exceeding expectations.

I first heard about Street Pastors, the main object of my study, through contacts at British universities, and they have lingered in my mind ever since. What particularly impressed me was their combination of providing safety and care in a non-pressurising, Christian manner. Moreover, the Street Pastors appeal to issues like policing, volunteering, welfare, and public morality – all keywords in the Political Science and Public Administration Department of VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where I am affiliated. Needless to say, my sabbatical could not have been better spent than on the Street Pastors.

At this point, I would like to express my gratitude to the Street Pastors for accepting me in their voluntary work, inviting me into their homes, and giving me a taste of their churches. My research would never have been accomplished without the accessibility and trust of all those involved; this report is my gift to them in return. A special note of thanks is also due to respondents in the South Wales police, Cardiff General Hospital, and Cardiff Council for their willingness and the time they took to talk to me. At Cardiff University, Trevor Jones and Nick Johns, each in his own way, gave me the support and friendship I needed, something I still very much appreciate. Thanks to my wife and son for our lovely time together abroad. And thank you, dear reader, for taking notice of my findings. Please jump directly to the summary and conclusions chapter if the report has waxed too long.

Ronald van Steden

Amstelveen, the Netherlands

November 2014



## Chapter 1: Setting the scene

*A street pastor is a volunteer who cares for, listens to and helps other people, particularly in the night-time economy environment, in busy areas where people are drinking, partying and moving between clubs and pubs (Isaac & Davies, 2014: 13).*

### Introduction

The United Kingdom is notorious for its aggressive night-time economy. Even a quick glance through the academic literature reveals an abundance of publications regarding the weekly transformation of Britain's town centres into 'no-go areas' (Roberts, 2006) filled with inebriated young people roaming around until the early hours of the morning. Scholars specifically refer to social and political anxiety about long-standing traditions of binge drinking and violent brawls, which enjoy widespread media coverage. However, these traditions lately seem to have spilled into a 'new culture of intoxication' (Measham & Brain, 2005). Within the logics of a consumer culture and fuelled by the legal and economic deregulation of pubs and clubs over the past 15 years or so, adolescents are overtly seduced into participating in hedonistic leisure activities devoted at heavy alcohol consumption. Particular factors, like abundant marketing, premises playing loud music so partygoers are forced to consume, and the invention of 'happy hours' (or cheap supplies), have boosted drinking rates. Hobbs et al. (2005) therefore speak of 'violent hypocrisy': the very much lamented crime and disorder problems involved in an average night out are an effect of the very same political and commercial system that encourages people to drink until they drop.

However, fascinatingly enough, this market-oriented way of exploiting the British night-time economy is just half the story. Not everyone views human value as primarily laden with instrumental rationalities of commerce and trade. Street



Pastors,<sup>1</sup> who have thus far mostly been overlooked in scholarly reflections on the night-time economy, embody a different attitude to partygoers in urban spaces drowning in alcohol. Standing in the Biblical tradition, they acknowledge people's intrinsic dignity as a benevolent and loving God embraces every one of them. Therefore, rather than inspiring partygoers to drink and condemning offenders for any misconduct, Street Pastors respond to problems like anti-social behaviour, public disorder and feelings of insecurity by 'caring, listening and engaging' (Isaac & Davies, 2009; 2014) with those vulnerable persons on the street. 'Being there' without preaching or prejudice is their primary goal.

## Research questions

This research project concentrates on the work of Street Pastors, who respond to problems of crime and disorder in urban night-life. The study's overarching objectives are to explore the ways in which the Street Pastors' behaviours and motivations contribute to shifting people on a night out towards positive endeavours, and how professionals and partygoers experience their work. This leads to the following research questions:

1. How are the Street Pastors organised?
2. What do Street Pastors do during a night out?
3. Why do people volunteer as Street Pastors?
4. What impact do Street Pastors have on the night-time economy?

The underlying rationale of this project, which provides theoretical depth to the questions posed above, is to investigate what the Christian faith can still contribute to a secular society. This goal rests on two assumptions. First, personal faith and moral beliefs are very important in the way people define who they are, what they do, and what effect they have on others:

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<sup>1</sup> [www.streetpastors.co.uk](http://www.streetpastors.co.uk)

true belief is not only a doctrine, believed content, but a source of energy that the person who has a faith taps performatively and thus nurtures his or her entire life (Habermas, 2006: 8).

Second, faith and belief are vigorous forces for good in society. In contradiction to dominant discourses that religious convictions may give rise to fundamentalism, violent or otherwise, it is argued that taking a leap of faith can have strong positive effects in terms of love, charity and help.

## **Relevance**

Notwithstanding portrayals of night-life in the UK as 'liminal' spaces where a temporarily relaxation of everyday constraints goes hand in hand with an enormous presence of police, door staff, and CCTV cameras to suppress chaotic situations, the following chapters introduce a presentation of 'positive' – or 'constitutive' (cf. Schuilenburg et al., 2014) – processes at work in people's lives. Street Pastors prove that 'altruism' and 'doing good' are important social qualities, too, thereby challenging the dominant idea that the night-time economy is solely organised around economic and punitive policies.

There are many ways in which a positive approach is relevant. As a result of an enduring and unwavering mournfulness about the state of mankind and its habitat, people face a persuasive, yet misleading, rhetoric suggesting that no other solutions are feasible than policing and control when it comes to the governance of public safety in a night-life district. Put differently, scholars, politicians and journalists tend to overlook the voluntary, modest and silent, albeit invaluable, contributions that volunteers like the Street Pastors make to a safer, and certainly more loving, society. They bring to light many commonly ignored, positive human facets: hope, creativity, and spirituality. Ignoring such facets is a mistake for they are of huge psychological worth (cf. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) when helping vulnerable and volatile partygoers on a night out.

By following the logic of social justice rather than punitive justice, Street Pastors attempt to unfold constitutive and inclusive responses to night-life problems, which deserve greater consideration. As Baillergeau writes, this social justice line displays

an optimistic view that is fuelled by hope for a way out of marginality through opening doors that lead to the (re)gaining of dignity and respect. In contrast, the exclusionary line can be viewed as pessimistic with regards to the prospects of homeless [and other vulnerable, RvS] people (2014: 362).

Amid the bombardment of literature about the criminalisation and banishment of disorderly conduct from streets and squares, concurrent stories of compassion and generosity also deserve to be heard. Giving such stories a platform is a sincere token of recognition for the hard work Street Pastors do, but also serves as a sign of optimism regarding society at large. Religious faith and moral beliefs have the authority to expose people to goodness, and make them accepted as immanently valuable.

## **A case study in Cardiff**

The foremost reason for picking the Street Pastors for my research is because they represent what is called a 'critical case' (Flyvbjerg, 2006). That is, Street Pastors have strategic importance in relation to the general problem of disregarding positive views on the governance of public safety in the night-time economy. They cast doubt on taken-for-granted knowledge about night-life as exclusively geared to public drunkenness, violence and the exclusion of undesirables. The pastors remind us that other worlds of friendship and trust do still exist in a culture inured to drinking areas and law enforcement. Having said this, Christians obviously don't hold a monopoly on trust, care and 'doing good'. It is hard, though, to find any substitute for what Street Pastors exemplify in England & Wales.

In preparing the research, I visited the Street Pastor's general director and coordinator late in January 2014. They kindly agreed to cooperate and supplied contact details for Street Pastors and related stakeholders in the police, the National Health Service (NHS), the municipal administration, and the Borough Council. Subsequently, I sought to gain a better feel for what Street Pastoring does by reading books (Isaac & Davies, 2009; 2014), evaluations (Cornish, 2008; Johns et al., 2009a; Collins-Mayo et al., 2012), and research papers (Collins-Mayo, 2013; Green & Johns, 2011; Johns et al., 2009b; Middleton & Yarwood, in press). Situating the research in Cardiff, the capital city of Wales, has a pragmatic reason, as it is the home of the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, with which I have personal contacts. My fieldwork covered the months July and August 2014, and utilised a triangulation of data collection methods – semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and reviewing Street Pastor reports – all of which are outlined below.

### ***Interviews, observations, and weekly reports***

To start with, semi-structured interviews represent a central technique in the social sciences to tap 'richly detailed' (Hermanowicz, 2002: 48) information from respondents. Almost everyone approached agreed to take part in the interviews. In total, I met 29 respondents during 26 sessions (at three locations I interviewed two people simultaneously). The respondents include the Street Pastor scheme's director and coordinator, twenty randomly selected members of the Street Pastor team (25 per cent of the total population), three senior police officers, including Cardiff's former and current chief superintendents, a senior partnership analyst with the local authorities, a senior nurse, and two professors affiliated to the NHS. Representatives from the police, the local authorities, and the NHS gave their professional verdicts about their partnership with the Street Pastors in Cardiff's night-time economy.

The interview topics discussed with the Street Pastors themselves covered, among other things, the respondents' personal backgrounds and motivations, the voluntary work they do, their impact on direct stakeholders, and issues related to

church, religion and prayer. At the same time, the conversations were open enough to enable interviewees to bring up additional important themes. On average, interviews lasted from 45 minutes to an hour. Virtually all interviews were transcribed, amounting to 475 pages of textual data (one person did not agree to our conversation being tape recorded).<sup>2</sup> For ethical reasons, the interviews were anonymised as far as possible before being incorporated into the report. My qualitative analysis of the primary material has resulted in the discovery and categorisation of what Street Pastors do, why they do it, and what (perceived) impact they have in Cardiff's town centre.

Secondly, participatory observation is an ethnographic method for studying social phenomena, like the Street Pastor scheme, in day-to-day situations (Kawulich, 2005). During two Friday and three Saturday nights, I went out wearing a high-visibility jacket with 'Street Pastor observer' printed on the back. This jacket did not seem to interfere with actual situations very much. Either people thought I was part of the team or they were too busy with their friends (or too drunk) to make any proper judgements about my presence. In total, the shifts observed covered approximately 24 hours spent delving into the Street Pastors' social environments and learning from 'the action'. My documentation of what happened on the streets consisted of hand-written field notes, which were expanded into typed narratives. The Street Pastors tenderly welcomed me aboard their team. Every one was open to informal talks; a few respondents even invited me to their homes and their churches. This made it relatively easy to become a more or less 'natural' part of the people I studied.

A disadvantage of participatory observation methods are their inherent subjectivity. Apart from my own unavoidable perceptions and opinions, time constraints may also introduce biases because I was only able to see what was happening on a limited number of night outs. To alleviate this problem, the Street Pastor coordinator provided me with weekly reports – rather like diaries – covering

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<sup>2</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to the Mijntscript Team for their invaluable assistance.

September 2013 to August 2014. The completed reports, 114 in all, offer statistical information about what Street Pastors do, and contain comprehensive descriptions of proceedings on Friday and Saturday nights. In addition, NHS and Borough Council policy documents allowed a thorough assessment of their work.

## ***Reflection***

The results of this research must be treated with caution. First, there is no such person as ‘the’ Street Pastor. The youngest respondent I met was in her early twenties; the oldest was well over seventy. Most of them had salaried occupations as varied as cleaner, fighter jet engineer, physiotherapist, television broadcaster, and traffic warden. A small number of respondents were retired or performed only voluntary work. Street Pastors, overall, seemed very busy people, involved in all kinds of voluntary activities for churches, food banks, soup kitchens, toddler groups, homeless shelters, and so on. Most respondents were surprisingly candid about their volunteering and faith; others remained somewhat distant and reserved. This was also apparent in the way Street Pastors operated on the streets: while many chatted with people and sometimes prayed with them, others thrived in a more quiet, but no less supportive display. Street Pastors are just like ordinary people in all their admirable diversity.

Subsequently, it was impossible to isolate the impact of Street Pastors on the night-time economy in terms of crime rates, anti-social behaviour and people’s well-being. The Street Pastors are part of a tightly knit partnership between police, door staff, taxi marshals, the town centre CCTV system, the NHS, and ambulance services. It is reasonable to suppose that in working together the partnership has a tangible effect on how partygoers go about having fun. However, subjective perceptions provide anecdotal evidence about the specific contributions Street Pastors make to the partnership. Such perceptions do matter and must be taken into account if we want to grasp the acceptance and integration of Street Pastors in this broader collaborative network.

On a final note, observations about the Cardiff Street Pastors cannot automatically be generalised to other schemes. Although Ascension Trust,<sup>3</sup> the umbrella organisation under which the pastors work, sets common standards and procedures for local projects, Cardiff might be unique in the way it works in partnership; its town centre is among the top in terms of the highest density of pubs and clubs per square mile in the UK; and arrangements like the Alcohol Treatment Centre – of which a detailed description is provided later on – are not typical of the rest of Britain. Because of the small sample size, the findings in this context do thus not necessarily apply to other Street Pastor schemes. They must predominantly be understood as correcting leading negative interpretations of the way night-life is governed: through their visible presence Street Pastors give expression to strategies of attention, affection, and affirmation, instead of law enforcement, punishment, and exclusion.

## **What follows**

The reminder of the report is laid out as follows: Chapter 2 assesses the organisational background of Street Pastors and the way they are managed and coordinated in Cardiff. Chapter 3 gives a survey of what Street Pastors do on Friday and Saturday nights. Chapter 4 explains what motivates people to become a Street Pastor, after which Chapter 5 deals with the impact Street Pastors have on the myriad stakeholders. Chapter 6 closes by answering the research questions and offering reflections.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.ascensiontrust.org.uk](http://www.ascensiontrust.org.uk)

## Chapter 2: The Street Pastor organisation

*Street pastors can be argued to embody a certain post-secular ethic: they are trained by both secular and religious groups; view the city as a spiritual landscape yet are attuned to its material rhythms and needs; and work in the contexts of their own (varied) Christian faith (Middleton & Yarwood, in press).*

### Introduction

The original push to set up a Street Pastor scheme in Cardiff dates back to 2008. In that year, Ignite,<sup>4</sup> a Christian youth ministry, launched the scheme after organising an ambitious project in Cardiff. Many volunteers worked alongside youngsters, getting them involved in their communities and feeling proud about it. When jobs like painting shops, doing building work and cleaning up a park were finished, several volunteers decided to form a night watch as it was a bank holiday and the police expected many visitors to a rugby league match (Cardiff hosts a massive stadium with a total seating capacity of 72,500) to come into the town centre. This night watch, which was evaluated positively, served as a kind of pilot for the later Street Pastor scheme. Before going into further detail about who Street Pastors are, what they do, why they do it, and the impact they have, the present chapter sketches the background to their work. The first section depicts the wider Street Pastor movement, led by the Ascension Trust, under which the Cardiff scheme operates as a franchise. Section two portrays the management and oversight structure of the Cardiff Street Pastors. In section three, the general procedures of Street Pastoring and their Night-Base Team are described. The chapter closes with brief conclusions.

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<sup>4</sup>

[www.igniteme.org](http://www.igniteme.org)



## The Street Pastor movement

Les Isaac, a reverend and director of the Ascension Trust, set up the first Street Pastor scheme in Brixton, South London, in 2003. His initiative was founded in response to incidents of gun crime and gang violence that terrorised urban neighbourhoods. The main aim of the Ascension Trust, which was established as early as 1993, is to assist churches to reach out to social problems in constructive and effective ways. We still see this 'hands-on' mentality shine through in what a Street Pastor is and does. As Isaac & Davies write,

*Street* has become a prefix that conveys the absence of structure [and] has been adopted for its currency, for its rawness, edginess and ability to update or remarket. A Street Pastor believes that the streets of our towns and cities are places of opportunity to help and care for people (2009: 19-20; italics in original).

Today, Street Pastor teams are active in 280 towns in Britain as well as in the United States, Australia and elsewhere, involving over 11,000 trained volunteers (Isaac & Davies, 2014). Street Pastors are all committed Christians who serve their communities not through vigilantism and law enforcement, but through love, practical support, and dialogue with people.

Street Pastors are volunteers drawn from across the very varied Christian spectrum, yet are guided by shared principles and values. In Cardiff, the majority are from Baptist and Evangelical movements and many of them belong to 'free' (independent) churches as opposed to established Roman Catholic, Reformed or Anglican denominations. Street Pastors are not immediately recognisable as Christians, for example by wearing visible religious symbols like the Cross, the Dove and the Fish. Teams wear neutral blue-coloured caps, polo shirts, and jackets marked with the words 'Street Pastor' in white. They also carry bags and rucksacks filled with flip-flops, water bottles, chocolate bars, space blankets and other gifts

they provide to people in need. Street Pastors have a particular interest in (binge-drinking) youth during a night out, but they may also help the homeless.

According to formal principles and policy guidelines (Isaac & Davies, 2009; 2014), Street Pastors don't preach or proselyte; they don't spread the Gospel by proactively spreading Bibles and Christian messages. In other words: Street Pastors must demonstrate their authentic interest in human beings by expressing a non-patronising, non-threatening, and practically minded attitude. In the Street Pastors' eyes, every individual stands equal before God and is therefore imbued with eternal dignity. This means that the volunteers should set aside their own assumptions, prejudices, and convictions about someone's appearance, sexuality or race. How appalling human behaviour might be, one can never fully gauge people's inner emotions and feelings. Only when people spontaneously bring up issues about their own life, faith and struggles with God, will the Street Pastors enter such areas.

Ideally, Street Pastors are gifted with the blessing of time. Volunteers patiently build bridges between isolated individuals and institutions like the police and ambulance services, soak up aggression, pull drunks from the gutter, and listen to people's personal stories (Isaac & Davies, 2014). Pastors do not run from one fire to the other, but stay with partygoers and give them attention. By reading people's temperament and body language, Street Pastors are 'ready for everything' and, if necessary, they try to cool down incandescent situations without having to split up a fight. Encouraging individuals to sit down calmly and initiating small talk are two of the qualities Street Pastors must have if they are to function effectively. Encounters may stop after the exchange of a few words, but sometimes 'questions behind questions' come up, stirring kind-hearted conversations about life and faith. Prayers from (groups of) sympathisers, both nearby and nation-wide, accompany the Street Pastors in their activities. Action and contemplation are strongly united.

Viewed historically, what Street Pastors do can be depicted as a novel expression of much longer established Christian involvement in community and individual well-being. Faith-based organisations stand in a centuries-old tradition that boosts social action, volunteering and emancipation. Modern Western welfare

states have even been built on Christian, and later on Social-Democratic principles and actions (cf. Bowpitt, 1998). Nowadays, Street Pastor teams are part of a broader, yet incoherent, social movement, ranging from neighbourhood watches and guardian angels to food banks and soup kitchens. These initiatives are united in their effort to alleviate the immediate needs of all sorts of people, 'and build a world based on sharing rather than competition' (Warnar & Clifton, 2014: 56). There is hence something countercultural about what Street Pastors signify. They radically and indiscriminately show love to people in a world dictated by the harsh laws of money and profit.

## **Management and coordination**

In common with other areas in Britain, the Cardiff Street Pastors were set up by the Ascension Trust and are run by a local management board. This board consists of Ignite's CEO (the scheme's general director, who is answerable to the board and to the Ascension Trust), the scheme's coordinator, representatives from South Wales police, several leaders of churches in the city, and trustees of Ignite who are legally and financially responsible for the charity. Representatives drawn from the Street Pastors also attend quarterly management meetings. Because they are involved in the scheme on a regular basis, the Street Pastors are tasked with bringing to the meetings their observations and views about what should be done. Generally speaking, the management board will approve their recommendations.

On a higher policy level, agendas for meetings concern such topics as the scheme's current strengths and weaknesses in terms of numbers, people leaving, recruitment needs, finance, publicity, and future plans. Most members of the board do not regularly go on patrol with the Street Pastors. This is different for the general director and coordinator, who have gained a lot of experience going out on the street, sharing their personal commitment, and dealing with the practicalities of Street Pastoring. The scheme's coordinator is pivotal to the smooth running of the team. She is paid for 30 hours per week to fulfil a number of key responsibilities (interview #12, Street Pastor management) as outlined below.

Her first task is doing the administration: organising the team rotas for each month, circulating the Street Pastors' weekly reports to all stakeholders, keeping the volunteers informed, processing the paperwork, dealing with special requests, and so on. Alongside the director, the coordinator is also active in recruiting volunteers by giving talks to parishes, sending out posters and letters to churches, using social media and e-mail, and activating already existing Christian networks. Regarding the last activity, the Street Pastors themselves are very good at recognising other suitable people. Mouth-to-mouth advertisement is an important way to recruit new volunteers. As a result, quite a number of Street Pastors are family, friends or relatives.

A third and related coordinating task is networking. In particular, the scheme's director spends much of his time in formal and informal meetings with senior police officers, representatives of the local authorities, council members, club and pub owners, and many others. He and the coordinator give a kindly, accessible face to the Street Pastors. Most of the professionals in the local night-time economy now know about their work, and can easily contact the scheme's office if an issue or problem occurs.

Fundraising, inevitably, is a further major responsibility. Once a year, the coordinator hosts a big charity auction and Christmas dinner, which police officers, municipal representatives, NHS professionals, and especially pub and club owners see as their way of supporting the scheme. Entrepreneurs supply raffle prizes, and, in common with the local churches, pay admission fees for Street Pastors to attend the party. Complementary sources of funding are private gifts, donations from churches, and (one-off) financial support from the police, local authorities and commercial enterprises. An Italian restaurant next to the church where the Street Pastors gather offers them free pasta, while various other businesses supply water bottles, flip-flops, chocolate bars and additional kit.

A fifth aspect of the coordination function is to facilitate obligatory training and education for the team. Instructors from assorted organisations, including the Ascension Trust, the South Wales police and social services, deliver tailor-made

courses on the night-life of Cardiff's inner city. After the Street Pastors have undergone 12-day sessions covering themes like roles and responsibilities, alcohol and drug awareness, counselling, mentoring, rudimentary sociology, and youth culture, they are ready to handle different situations in the night-time economy. Furthermore, in recent years the scheme has developed optional training programmes on first-aid, manual handling (e.g., how to physically lift weighty people in a wheelchair), and intervention therapy with persons under the influence of alcohol. In summary, the Street Pastors appear to be properly prepared for the challenges they may encounter during their nightly shifts.

Finally, the director and coordinator look after individual needs. Street Pastors go to their own churches for spiritual refreshment, but the coordinator, for example, spends time working out which team members have good chemistry together, tries to recognise any troubles and limitations people may have, and sends cards to those on sick leave. In some instances, the director and coordinator had to correct behaviour that was not good practice. For example, they gave guidance to Street Pastors who did not like wearing the hat. However, most of such hiccups are dealt with in passing, with no disciplinary action required. The director could remember only one Street Pastor whom he had asked to step down, because the man had a passion for sharing his faith with every person he met. Although it is wonderful that people are so full of God and the Gospel, they should not use the scheme as a platform for their oration. Street Pastors spread the Good News by aiding their fellows, not by constantly preaching to them. That theological perspective ultimately underpins everything the Street Pastors stand for.

## **Street Pastors and the Night-Base Team**

The Cardiff Street Pastor scheme by and large comprises 60 Street Pastors and 20 volunteers in the Night-Base Team. Their contributions are scheduled at a minimum of one per month. The scheme operates from the Tabernacle Welsh Church, a building that borders on the inner city's most crowded night-life area at the bottom

of St. Mary Street. The congregation makes its communal space freely available to the Street Pastors during Friday and Saturday nights. These nights follow a standard pattern.

Street Pastors and volunteers staffing the Night-Base Team arrive at approximately 9.30 pm. The first group starts topping up their bags and rucksacks with equipment and give-aways stored in plastic boxes. Teams of Street Pastors carry a smartphone, a basic first aid kit, gloves, wipes, notepads, pencils, space blankets, flip-flops, bottles of water, chocolate bars, and a radio so they can hear and contact the other night-time economy workers. Some of the pastors give a personal touch to their outfit by carrying cards advertising projects like 'Alpha courses': crash-courses in the meaning of Christianity. One respondent said he had contacted the Gideons (an association that donates Bibles to hotels, schools, jails, and hospitals) for 15 New Testaments to distribute if people ask for profound literature (interview #25, Street Pastor).

Meanwhile, the volunteers responsible for the Night-Base prepare coffee, tea, biscuits and cake. Unlike the Street Pastors, those volunteers do not require special training. Their principal function is to 'serve the servers': to provide a hospitable and safe haven to both the Street Pastor team and night-time professionals, such as police and taxi marshals, who need a break. An Italian restaurant owner carries in a tray of pasta at 9.45 pm to be reheated a few hours later. Working in the Night-Base is a 'humble job':

You must be ready to support in a very basic way. [...] Well, you're there to wash up, to serve. You are a waitress (interview #2, Night-Base Team).

This is not necessarily meant as a criticism. Working in the Night-Base can be 'almost a relief, because it is not a hugely responsible role' (interview #2, Night-Base Team). And other respondents added:

I am happy just to be supportive. [...] I have no desire to be out on the streets picking up drunken people [...]. I find it easier to talk to people over a cup of tea (interview #18, Night-Base Team).

I feel that the Night-Base was a real hub. [...] I mean, it is a bit of being a director who sends out his teams. You are there, and you are sort of watching over them. [...] It is monitoring what is going on and being aware of need. I just love that (interview #2, Night-Base Team).

Even so, it can be hard to recruit enough volunteers for the Night-Base, presumably because it is not as exciting as going out on the streets. Most volunteers opt for the ‘thrill’ outside the Tabernacle Welsh Church.

Street Pastoring starts at 10.00 pm. Before heading off, usually a number of police officers arrive for an informal meeting lasting five or six minutes. The Senior Street Pastor in charge of the team reads a little from the Scriptures and says a brief prayer for a good and safe night out. The police tell the Street Pastors what is happening – if there are any events like a football match on, and how the atmosphere feels outside. After this meeting, everybody signs an attendance sheet, the senior Street Pastors check their radios, and two or three mixed teams, male and female, leave the base.

The Night-Base stays open for anybody who works in the city centre and wants to come in. Every night is different. At times, it is busy with taxi marshals and police officers who go to the toilet, have a tea or coffee, eat some biscuits or seek refuge from the rain. Other nights can be slightly boring, which gives volunteers time to read a book, play with their smartphones, watch a movie on their laptop, and pray if they receive a message from the Street Pastors:

A Street Pastor rang in at a point and said: 'We have a girl with us. Could you pray? She says that she has been dragged down the stairs by her hair and feels very distressed. Could you pray that we are wise enough to do the right thing for her?' So we prayed (interview #2, Night-Base Team).

Aside from making tea and coffee, prayer is part and parcel of what the Night-Base does. Volunteers place the night in God's hands by asking Him (or Her) for strength and reassurance for Street Pastors, night-time professionals and partygoers alike.

Street Pastors return to the Night-Base at 1.30 am for pasta and a break. They bring in people who cannot be helped outside only in rare emergency cases. This is formally not permitted for the sake of the volunteers' own safety, but Street Pastors sometimes have to bend the rules to resolve a pressing problem:

There was a young lad – he was about 19 – who was found in a doorway. It was pouring with rain. He was very drunk. In fact, he was nearly unconscious. So, the Street Pastors went to him. He had lost his friends. He didn't know where he was. He was soaking wet. He was very cold. He was in danger, but he refused to go in an ambulance. The Street Pastors couldn't just leave him, so they brought him in to the Night-Base, put one of those foil blankets around him, put him by the radiator and warmed him up. Rang his father, and his father came to get him (interview #1, Night-Base Team).

I had a lady on one occasion. I was out when I got called by the security guard of a bar. Her battery was flat on her mobile, she would have gone out for a meal with her husband, they got separated, and she was really panicking. We took her back to the Night-Base, charged her phone up for her, rang home, and found out where her husband was, which was about five minutes from where she had lost him. So they were reunited and both happy again (interview #20, Street Pastor).



The nightly shifts end at around 4.00 am on a Saturday or Sunday morning. Next day, the senior Street Pastor compiles his/her notes about what happened that night into a standardised report. These reports are submitted to the scheme's coordinator for further editing so the data can later be analysed quantitatively by the Borough Council's partnership analyst. The coordinator also e-mails the reports weekly to the police, the local authorities, the NHS, and other stakeholders. It is through this feedback that Street Pastors are held accountable for their work.

## **Concluding remarks**

This chapter has examined the question of how the Cardiff Street Pastor scheme is organised. As elsewhere in Britain, the scheme is affiliated to the Ascension Trust, which means that the Street Pastors are subject to the trust's rules on clothing, logos, training, policies and procedures. Nevertheless, they enjoy autonomy in tailoring their training to local circumstances, and in creating links to other important agencies in the city's night-time economy.

The scheme has a professional management board and a paid coordination unit responsible for putting the volunteers on monthly rotas, recruiting trustworthy and mature Christians, networking with police, municipal officials and door staff, raising funds, and so on. The Cardiff Street Pastors seem unique in hosting a 'Night-Base Team', an operational base where both the pastors and professionals like police officers and taxi marshals are welcome. The team offers them refreshments and prayers during the nights out.

Street Pastor teams consist of two or three people, male and female. There are usually two operational teams on a Friday or Saturday night. Senior Street Pastors are responsible for the teams, writing and collecting weekly report forms, which contain numerical information and descriptions of evening encounters with the public. The forms are sources of accountability to the Ascension Trust, the South Wales police, the NHS, and the local authorities.

## Chapter 3: Street Pastors in action

*A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him (Luke 10: 30-34; King James translation).*

### Introduction

Cardiff after dark. A lively night-life buzz descends on the inner city. Going out is a matter of 'seeing and being seen': girls wearing high heels and short skirts, groups of funny-looking hen and stag partiers, and other glamorously dressed partygoers flock into the pub and club areas. Blaring loud music fills the air, sexily clad and invitingly smiling girls hand out flyers offering cheap alcohol to attract customers into their premises. This promotion of 'carnavalesque behaviour' (Hubbard, 2013) finds its expression in excessive drinking, the loosening of publically accepted (sexual) morals, and anti-social conduct. In response, the local authorities and police force have forged partnerships with door staff, paramedics and taxi marshals to get a grip on a town that looks distinctly different in the daytime hours. Amidst all the hubbub, the Street Pastors immerse themselves in the 'rhythm of the night' (Middleton & Yarwood, in press) by walking the streets and seeking encounters with vulnerable people. This chapter first categorises and describes their roles and goals. Subsequently, it presents rudimentary statistics on the pastors' tasks, and addresses such feelings of risk and fear as they may experience. Finally, the chapter draws conclusions about the Street Pastors' outreach work.

## **General role and goal**

Asked about their general role and goal, Street Pastors either refer to 'making people safe' or 'caring for people'. They look after vulnerable – mostly drunken – youngsters. In practice, such missions of befriending people and making people safe are associated with concepts like 'parenting' or 'parenthood':

I would say it is a caring role, [...] looking out for the vulnerable, but also spending time with the night-time economy staff (interview #8, Street Pastor).

Our major job is obviously caring and keeping people safe, helping people (interview #11, Street Pastor).

The caring aspect is the great thing about being called 'Street Pastors'. [...] And what is a Street Pastor when you look at the derivation of it? It's a shepherd, and we're there to care for the sheep. Who are the sheep? Everybody (interview #12, Street Pastor management).

Caring. [...] Whatever is needed at that moment in time. You know, people that need your psychical help to get them clean and get them to a safe place (interview #19, Street Pastor).

My primary role: to make sure that people get home safely [...]. It is practical, just helping people, chatting and building relations with them (interview #23, Street Pastor).

It is very much hands-on in terms of getting involved and identifying people who have a need and just being aware of the surroundings (interview #16, Street Pastor).

We want to help people who may be vulnerable and struggling on the streets at night (interview #24, Street Pastor).

I guess it fulfils a maternal instinct which I feel very strongly – a caring, nurturing instinct (interview #2, Night-Base Team).

I just want to see our kids, our youngsters, safe. [...] For me, it is the parenting; you make sure they get home (interview #17, Street Pastor).

I think the way I am is a motherly type of role; for sure, a friendly, motherly shoulder to cry on (interview #5, Street Pastor).

From a semantic point of view, the Street Pastors' impulsive expressions of what they do are very interesting. Nowadays, safety and, in a broader sense, security has almost become synonymous with negative notions like law enforcement, discipline and control. Fairly concentrated and thus manageable 'drinking quarters' have been scripted around the harsh governance of public safety, enabling targeted police and private security responses when nuisance behaviour and public offences tend to disturb the smartly marketed night-time economy (Jayne et al., 2006). Yet the Street Pastors remind us that, originally, safety (*securitas* in Latin) has nothing to do with policing activities, but instead denotes a 'state of being' (*-tas*) wherein worries are removed, are set aside (*se-*), through care (*cura*). Care signifies 'attentiveness', something altruistic, whereby 'anxiety' and 'concern' are alleviated from people who are taken care of (Hamilton, 2013). Nevertheless, 'too much' care may have the detrimental effect of negligence and indifference on the part of the care's recipients. They can become bored and demanding. We shall return to this in Chapter 5.

## **Out on the streets**

The common denominator of what Street Pastors do is walk around Cardiff city centre. Framed in police jargon: they represent a visible, uniformed presence patrolling the streets. This analogy should not be overstretched, though. In contrast to the police, Street Pastors fulfil the role of ‘caretakers’ or ‘ambassadors’: ‘friendly faces’ on the street who do not enforce laws, but are surrounded by a recognisable, non-threatening and trustable aura of ‘doing good’. Nights can be quiet and dull, but Street Pastors are habitually occupied with numerous calls and requests for help. We explore their tasks below.

### ***Crime and disorder prevention***

Looking through the lens of the ‘routine activity theory’ (Cohen & Felson, 1979), it is reasonable to assume that Street Pastors take on a share of the work of preventing crime and disorder. According to this theory, crime is not so much related to social root causes (e.g., inequality, unemployment, and poverty) as it is driven by opportunities: crime occurs when an offender and a target come together in a situation where proper surveillance is absent. As ‘capable guardians’ on the streets, Street Pastors may prevent problems either by their physical visibility or by removing objects that can cause trouble. To begin with the latter, they collect up abandoned bottles and glasses, and put them in the street litter bins. On the surface, these utensils may look harmless, but they can be used as sharp weapons. A researcher working with the NHS says:

We think that there’s enough evidence out there that weapon availability is very important in weapon use. We think it’s rational to clear the city of glass as far as we can (interview #6).

Besides preventing victimisation, by reducing the amount of (broken) glass in Cardiff city centre, the Street Pastors also contribute to the public health system as they

forestall surgical procedures on people. Partygoers can't get seriously injured any more.

Second, Street Pastors are aware of strange looking situations. If they grasp that something is happening that doesn't feel right, they take a step back, hang on a second or two, observe a little, and, if necessary, interact with people. A Street Pastor remembers:

I saw a young man and a young woman together. That situation didn't look right, so I called to them. She was really struggling walking. I asked: 'Are you okay? Can I help you?' The young man literally pushed the girl to the ground and ran... you have to guess what was gonna happen (interview #9, Street Pastor).

In this respect, respondents tell stories of what they call 'predators' or 'packs of wolves': groups of men who are on the look out for innocent girls at 3 am (interviews #8 and #24, Street Pastors; #3, police; #7, NHS researcher). Indeed, as Sheard (2011) indicates, the experience of 'clubbing', often described in terms of flirting, dancing, and pleasure, can be disturbing, fearful, even traumatic, especially for women. For example, they panic about 'spiked' drinks (drinks mixed with rape drugs), being left alone, and getting assaulted.

However, it is not just girls. Boys just as well as girls can become vulnerable if they are drunk and disoriented: their money can be stolen; they are at risk of losing their phones; they might leave their coach tickets, ID-cards, and passports lying around. In response, Street Pastors remain close to people and recover their possessions:

We came across [anonymised] who was out with [anonymised] and [anonymised]; he was so drunk he could hardly stand up. He was quite aggressive when we offered to help, so all we could do was keep an eye on them from a distance. We made sure they were okay and followed them to a

taxi rank. When we returned to Park Plaza, we found [anonymised] had left his wallet on the wall, so we gave it to a local police officer (SP report, 7 September 2013).

Later on in the evening we were walking past Revolutions when a fight kicked off. There were two lads and one girl was really going for it! The door staff had to intervene quite forcefully just to get them to stop. We picked up various wallets, phones and keys and, when everything had died down, returned them to the owners. We then stayed there for a while talking to people and had some good conversations (SP report, 4 October 2013).

Third, from time to time, Street Pastors actively intervene when the temperature rises among the people. They do not literally split up fights, but try to interrupt and diffuse escalation before they reach the flashpoint.

[Anonymised] was quite drunk and vomiting. [...] Eventually, she was able to stand on her feet – she had friends around her [...]. Her friends were also drunk and borderline aggressive with the girl [...]. We needed to be firm with them. Eventually, a male friend came over and was very aggressive. Street Pastors attempted to pacify him, which appeared to work, but he kept coming back each time getting more aggravated. Eventually, Street Pastors sensed it was about to tip over into violence and so for safety reasons withdrew. We think they must have got into a taxi as they were gone within a few minutes of us leaving them (SP report, 23 August 2014).

The majority of Street Pastors are not outwardly very sturdy, but they apply social skills such as having a nice talk, making a joke or doing something unexpected, which brings people off balance. The fact that most Street Pastors are middle-aged or older might have an effect, too. You simply don't swear and spark off a brawl when your (substitute) parents or grannies are in attendance.

### ***Information sharing***

Street Pastors and volunteers in the Night-Base Team have regular contact with a wide variety of people in the inner city's night-time economy: police, door staff, paramedics, 'Charlie Romeo' (the CCTV control room, Cardiff's 'invisible friend'), taxi marshals, partygoers and tourists. In so doing, they have evolved into a genuine 'information hub'. Street Pastors do not actively pursue this central position; it rather materialises as an unintended derivative of the work they do. Information from the Street Pastors flows in several directions.

First, police officers give informal briefings about the particularities of that night at the beginning of the Street Pastors' shift. In response, Street Pastors serve as 'extra eyes and ears' on the streets. If there are potential issues like aggressiveness and violence they will alert the nearest police officers:

We were at the top of St. Mary's Street outside the Peppermint watching a young man being very aggressive towards a young lady. I called this into Charlie Romeo and the police soon arrived and dealt with the aggressive man (SP report, 21 September 2013).

We attended a call from Henry's bar. They had spotted a man in the street behind the bar. He was now in a phone box. We approached and he was either very confused or on drugs. We talked with him for a while, but he was not making much sense. At the end of the night we saw him with no shirt on in Caroline Street acting strangely and being borderline aggressive at the entrance to one of the premises. We informed the police and they came over (SP report, 21 June 2014).

Furthermore, the Street Pastors put the intelligence they gather in their weekly reports for police use:



Some time ago, I reported that there was a guy who was always parked on the junction of Wharton Street and St Mary's Street. He used to be in a BMW, but can't find my report to confirm it was the same car, but it was definitely the same guy, bald and Afro/Caribbean in appearance. Haven't seen him for a long time but he was back tonight. He was sat in a black BMW, registration number [anonymised], and was parked up with his engine running on both occasions we walked past and he must have been there at least two hours. He was just sat there with his window down waiting. Don't know what he was doing but it appeared suspicious (SP report, 11 January 2014).

Second, the Street Pastors' reports are also available to the NHS and the local authorities. In conjunction with the police, these bodies are interested in the reports, which contain rich information about the pubs and clubs the Street Pastors are called to for help. If they pick up drunken people, the pastors usually walk them to the Alcohol Treatment Centre (ATC) – a sort of field hospital for the night-time economy (see more details below) – and have a little chat. As a respondent explains,

In our 'drunk tank', the Alcohol Treatment Centre, I thought that it could potentially be very powerful to ask the people there where they had their last drink. Often the people who would come in with them can say where they were. Of course, it's illegal to serve an intoxicated person. We've got this lead table of license premises where the people in the 'drunk tank' report they had the last drink. We know that the police and the County Council are using these data to get the top 4 (interview #6, NHS researcher).

Cardiff has a licensee's forum, composed of pub and club owner representatives, which publishes the names of badly operating pubs and clubs in the local newspaper as a way of 'naming and shaming'. This commonly serves as a 'wake-up call' to

colleagues acting irresponsibly and unacceptably. On top of that, the government has implemented a 'traffic light system' to grade premises – red, amber or green – based on their size, the number of incidents occurring, and the type of incidents. If required, the police and the licencing authority of Cardiff municipality take firm action. They can concentrate additional focus on premises by posting a couple of police officers close to the door, keeping an eye on the bar, checking the door staff, and sending in auditors to investigate legal standards. In sum, the Street Pastors provide information to a larger puzzle made up of police and NHS data on the basis of which local government can regulate Cardiff's night-life industry.

Third, the Street Pastors inform the police and the City Council about such matters as public urination and waste piling up. From their part, by keeping track of the 'hot spots' in town, local authorities may prevent more serious disorder by placing portable lavatories on the streets and deploying extra street sweepers. Recently, in August 2014, the City Council decided to remove the road closures placed around Cardiff city centre on Friday and Saturday nights. This raised general concern from the Street Pastors, the police, business owners, and taxi marshals about their own and the public's safety. In response, the Street Pastors took photographs of incidents such as reckless driving, taxis using pedestrian areas, and double parking. They hoped to convince the local authorities to reinstitute all barriers in the near future. Finally, the Street Pastors are walking road maps and tourist information points. They frequently give directions to people who have lost their way and proudly tell them about the history and highlights of Cardiff's city centre.

### ***Emotional labour***

From my research it is unmistakably clear that Street Pastors mainly perform tasks and duties that involve 'emotional labour'. This type of labour can be briefly defined as the labour involved in coping with other people's feelings (Hochschild, 1979). Regarding the positive contributions Street Pastors make to Cardiff's night-life, their work intermittently involves the appraisal, regulation and utilisation of bodily

feelings in themselves and in 'the other' so as to motivate people 'charismatically towards a worthwhile end' (Salovey & Mayer, 1990: 93). Affection, empathy and socially adaptive responses are significant personal properties here.

On a basic level, Street Pastors have shorter or lengthier conversations with partygoers. They listen, share a joke or sit with them while people pour their hearts out. It would be impossible to summarise the divergent stories on these pages, so some tales must suffice to give an impression of what Street Pastors do:

There was a young woman, she was in such a dreadful, dreadful state. I went to pick her up, and discovered she had been sick all down me. [...] She then wet herself, and she wet me. So it was like 'ew'. But this young lady had lost her mother. Her mother had died; she was trying to break off her relationship [...]. We were sitting there and it all came out, because she found somebody willing to listen (interview #9, Street Pastor).

There was a woman who was out with her two friends. She wanted to have a good time, but was sat down on a bench. So we approached her and it turned out her kid was about one and a half, and her brother was very much into 'the end of the world' pessimism. Was it 2012? Whatever it was, the woman had heard about the end of the Mayan calendar, and the apocalypse of humanity. [...] She went like 'I don't know what to do, we're gonna die', and hid her face in her hair. [...] After a while she asked: 'you don't believe the world's gonna end, you think we're still gonna be around next year?' 'Absolutely', I said, 'you'll get to watch your kid grow up, I guarantee you that'. To see the difference this twenty-five minute conversation had made to her, on a topic most people think of as ridiculous. You just sit there, take her seriously, and are valuable to her (interview #14, Street Pastor).

In addition, taxi marshals and door staff are open to conversations. Street Pastors frequently mingle with them. This activity goes beyond pragmatic 'networking' as they gain candid notice of people's personal lives, worries and frustrations:

We stop to talk to a huge doorman outside one of the clubs. He shows us holiday photos of his wife and children on an iPhone. One of the Street Pastors tells me that one of his children, a girl, was born too early and only nearly survived. She is fine now. Since the Street Pastors know about this, they keep contact with the man, ask how things are going, and try to support him (observation #4, 15 August 2014).

Street Pastors also present a listening ear to homeless people. This group is well served by other statutory organisations like the Salvation Army and the City Council, but the Street Pastors are happy to listen to anybody and make referrals to hostels and shelters. They know a number of homeless people personally – various Street Pastors also do voluntary work for the Salvation Army, soup kitchens, and food banks – and look after their well-being. Some people living on the streets are not open to contact, they might be on drugs and live in their own cocoon, whilst others have built ongoing relationships with the Street Pastor team.

Next, Street Pastors are good at handing out things to people: candy bars to homeless people, plastic water bottles to sober partygoers up, pink flip-flops to girls who are unable to walk in their high heels. They limp around barefoot and run the risk of cutting their feet on broken glass scattered around the pavement. The flip-flops especially have made the Street Pastors famous. Partygoers take them home as fashionable 'trophy of the night' and nickname the Street Pastors the 'flip-flop police'. This 'gift giving' doesn't imply any reciprocity; Street Pastors wish to establish peaceful associations with people, without expecting rewards or benefits in return. The new flip-flop owners find a sticker with the Street Pastor coordinator's contact details printed on it, which they use at times to show their gratitude.

A third dimension of emotional labour is to sit down with people to offer them solace and concrete help. Street Pastors often chaperone people who have had the famous 'one over the eight', sober them up, and safeguard them from worse. In such a vulnerable state, drunken people might be robbed or raped. Otherwise, Street Pastors try to preserve partygoer's dignity, defending them from photographs being taken. These days, social media sites make it easy to spread 'career-ending' pictures of people caught in a wasted state:

I had a very, very drunk lady that we were looking after, giving her water. She suddenly decided she wanted to go to the toilet. Of course, there were no toilets open, and she didn't want to pay to go back into a nightclub. So, she just dropped her pants. She weed in a doorway, and then she wanted me to pull her knickers back up for her, which wasn't one of my favourite activities. We kept trying because she was there, she was really drunk, and she didn't know what she was doing. We stood in the way so she wasn't exposing herself to half of Cardiff (interview #20, Street Pastor).

The Street Pastors are called to a pub just around the corner from their Night-Base. A young girl, barely dressed, is lying on the pavement throwing up her last diner. Her friend tries to calm her down as she is crying viciously. Police have arrived on the scene already. The female Street Pastor covers the drunken girl with a foil blanket, not because of the cold, it is actually quite warm this summer evening, but to protect her modesty (observation #2, 19 July 2014).

It should be unnecessary to point out in detail that attending to people is an intimate activity. Severely intoxicated partygoers can literally vomit over the Street Pastor's shoes and trousers. Or they can lie senseless on the pavement with the pastors trying to wake them up. Caring has its nasty side. Luckily, though, close interaction with the public can also be pleasant and encouraging:

Young people come for a hug. Certainly in Wales most of us think: 'you can't touch, you can't'. Do you know what? People need a hug sometimes, that's all they desire. I've got these great strapping lads, six footers, and they want to be hugged in the middle of the street (interview #9, Street Pastors).

While mixing with abandoned males and females, Street Pastors do their utmost to reach those people's close acquaintances. That can be a demanding job, because of the blaring volume level in discotheques and bars. Either the Street Pastors themselves or the persons they are try to telephone don't get the chance to hear anything. If necessary, Street Pastors negotiate with door staff to allow people back into the premises to find their lost friends or personal belongings. The ones who take up the least time are partygoers who stay over in a hotel or who are clearheaded enough to take a taxi home. Once in a while, though, Street Pastors get stuck with a vulnerable youth waiting for a friend, brother or parent to fetch them. These people, usually wearing a stony face, may travel dozens of miles to pick up their loved ones in the middle of the night. Street Pastor report forms note incidents that have taken up to 60 or 80 minutes before reaching a good outcome.

Lastly, Street Pastors take on the responsibility to decide whether or not they should forcefully intervene in a situation. They provide first aid and, when things get out of hand, they call 999 for back up from police and ambulance services:

We were called to McDonalds to check a girl who had stood on some broken glass. When we arrived we found the entrance covered in blood. She didn't seem to be in a lot of pain, I think the alcohol had something to do with it. So we sat her down and had a chat. While this was going on we cleaned her foot and checked for glass. There didn't seem to be any, but we suggested that she go to a doctor and get a medical opinion (SP report, 1 November 2013).

A street busker drew our attention to a young man that had been assaulted and who was with his girlfriend [anonymised] and several friends. It transpired that he had been alone at the point at which he had been assaulted. He was unable to recall what had happened. We quickly realised he needed medical attention for several deep cuts to his face and possible concussion. Unfortunately, [anonymised] was agitated and apparently abusive towards one of the mobile medics who stated he was only there to assist and did not expect to be spoken to 'like that' (SP report, 19 July 2014).

In general, Street Pastors prefer to pick up a wheelchair from their Night-Base or from one of the nearby hotels to bring somebody to the ATC. This field hospital used to be located in a local church, but has lately occupied its own premises which hosts two nurses, a permanent police officer to prevent hostilities, paramedic and ambulance staff, a row of beds, and basic equipment. The straightforward idea behind this is to stop people going to Cardiff's General Hospital, a few miles outside the city centre. On an average Friday or Saturday night, the Accident & Emergency Department cannot physically handle the number of intoxicated patients, some of whom are suffering from minor injuries like cuts, bruises and sprains (Moore et al., 2013). Hence, the ATC acts like a filter for the General Hospital, offering drunken people a tranquil environment where they can receive short-term treatment and sleep the alcohol off:

The Street Pastors are called to a young bloke, who can barely stand on his feet. He arches back and forth like a limbo dancer. A combination of long hours at work earlier that week and too much alcohol consumption on this night out seem to have done the trick. The Street Pastors put him in a wheelchair and ride him to the ATC where his 25th birthday celebration comes to a sudden end (observation #2, 19 July 2014).

While the majority of people brought into the ATC behave cooperatively, some of them are a real pain to the Street Pastors, calling them names, trying to walk away, vomiting or exposing themselves. After delivering people to the ATC, or another safe place such as a hotel or a certified taxi, the Street Pastors leave. They do not follow up on people, unless the same faces show up time and again. The ATC has close contacts with the City Centre Drug and Alcohol Team, which organises appointments for additional advice and support.

### ***Praying***

Praying, that 'dialogical act between humanity and divinity' (Giordan, 2011: 78), is involved in virtually every step the Street Pastors take. When driving into Cardiff's night-time economy, they pray for safety, strength and (moral) energy; 'I don't close my eyes, of course' (interview #11, Street Pastor). After arriving at the Night-Base Team, they practise a little devotion, read a part of the Bible – on Friday 1 August 2014, a Street Pastor told us the applicable story of Sodom and Gomorrah (observation #3) – and, again, they pray to seek God's blessing over the city's thriving night-life. One or two volunteers stay behind to pray in the base church, while Street Pastors pray outside, right and there on the streets, too:

We meet two homeless people sitting in a doorway. One of them, a guy with a sympathetic but marked face, asks the female Street Pastor to pray for them. The other instantly tells her to 'back off'. In one breath, the man also refers to God as 'the One who could save him', but says he has lost his confidence in mankind: 'no one loves me, no one can help me...'. His mate begs him to behave properly, because 'Street Pastors are Christians; they are good people'. When we walk off, the female Street Pastor prays to herself that Jesus' mercy may find a way to this poor man's heart, bless him (observation #4, 15 August 2014).



Not every Street Pastor prays that easily. They are reticent, not seeking to foist it on people – Street Pastors are not Street Preachers. One respondent said: ‘if I pray I use my own little time and space rather than standing over others’ (interview #23, Street Pastor). Overall, Street Pastors repeatedly pray or are prayed for by chains of people from churches and home groups – ‘I am covered in prayer’ (interview #2, Night-Base Team); ‘yeah, there is a lot of praying going on’ (interview #10, Street Pastor) – to guide them and to make the right decisions during their tour of duty. Street Pastors also list the names of people they have been in contact with, so they can pray for their safety, health and happiness afterwards.

## **Street Pastor statistics**

At the time of writing, the Cardiff Council partnership analyst had completed his annual report for the financial year April 2013 to March 2014 (King, 2014) in support of the Violent Crime Task Group, a public-private safety partnership watching over the city’s night-time economy. Certainly it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to quantitatively ‘prove’ that Street Pastoring works. Assumptions about crime and disorder prevention, for example, will never be fully evidence-based: you cannot scientifically measure what has not happened in relation to incidents and accidents. Nevertheless, this should not prevent us from presenting revealing figures from the Street Pastors’ weekly report forms during 2013/2014:

- The Street Pastors dealt with or assisted in a total of 1,131 incidents;
- 75% of these incidents involved assisting drunken persons;
- Of this number 25% of the cases involved Street Pastors waiting until a drunk was collected by friends or family;
- In 15% of the incidents the Street Pastors assisted an intoxicated person to get a taxi, another 26% of the incidents resulted in a Street Pastor handing over the care of this person to the ambulance service or the ATC. Only 4% of the people approached refused their assistance;
- Slightly less than 10% of the interactions involved homeless people;

- The Street Pastors collected 3,577 empty bottles and glasses, gave out 1,231 bottles of water, 662 pairs of flip-flops and 133 foil blankets, and witnessed 791 people urinating in the streets during 2013-2014.

What these statistics show is that 'emotional labour' – waiting with intoxicated people, carrying them to the ATC, distributing gifts – represents the inner core of what Street Pastors do. As such, they also protect partygoers from being harmed or injured ('crime and disorder prevention'). Building an excellent source of information is a logical inference from the Street Pastors' presence on the streets. The power of prayer continues to be a matter of faith, but even if it does not benefit society, it does no harm either. The question of 'what works?', therefore, is erroneous. We could better ask ourselves 'what makes sense?' and 'what matters?' in (night) life. There is overwhelming affirmative proof of people's positive perceptions of the Street Pastors in this respect (see Chapter 5 for more information).

## **Risk and threat**

A closing note on risk and threat in Cardiff's night-time economy: there are traces in the Street Pastors' weekly report forms of partygoers acting annoyingly, even aggressively towards them. As two illustrations reveal:

As we were walking back towards the Night-Base for our break, we heard the Night-Base calling Charlie Romeo to ask for a police unit as there was someone trying to force their way into the base. As the Senior Street Pastor, I was able to give Charlie Romeo the location so he could turn the cameras on the Tabernacle. A police unit was despatched, but did not arrive for at least 20/25 minutes (not an ideal situation!). We were able to rush to the Night-Base, by which time the person had moved on. In fact, what had happened was, there had been a knock on the door and as the ladies went to answer it,

a French man had tried to force entry. They were able to hold the door tight and force it closed. He had then proceeded to bang the windows very loudly. They were worried one would be smashed. On arrival, we were able to reassure them before we had our break (SP report, 22 February 2014).

Asked by Police Officers outside Revolution de Cuba to look after [anonymised] from Ystrad Mynach. She had been removed from the venue and was highly intoxicated. Police officers had searched her bag and no phone was found. We tried to offer water and to help her, however she was very aggressive and threatened to kick me in the face and asked if I wanted her to kill me. We spent about 20 minutes with her. We were concerned for her, however her continuing aggressive behaviour towards us resulted in us stepping away and reporting her to the police officers. As they approached her she ran down Greyfriars and jumped into a taxi. Later that evening as we attended the ATC we found her in there. The ATC staff did not know how she had arrived and confirmed that she was being very aggressive towards them also. We left her with them (SP report, 30 May 2014).

Every now and then, partygoers get jolly, steal a pastor's cap and run off with it. In reply, police officers would step in and tackle the rascals: frankly, you don't touch a Street Pastor. Some of the partygoers use insulting or vicious language – a phenomenon police and paramedics must regrettably also deal with. In other, more serious but sporadic events, Street Pastors found themselves in a situation where people threw punches around them to hit someone else, which was a signal to withdraw and pray. Fortunately, none of the Street Pastors has been assaulted in a way that required a hospital visit.

Most of the respondents interviewed related that they had never or hardly ever felt afraid on their nights out. On the whole, partygoers know who the Street Pastors are – they wear recognisable blue clothing – and treat them with gratitude rather than hostility. Moreover, the police, the door staff, the taxi marshals, the

CCTV control room, and the Street Pastors look after each other. They maintain constant radio contact and can press a 'panic button', just in case. Not unexpectedly, Street Pastors share the strong belief that God is with them and protects them. These Christian volunteers are not frightened, as they feel reassured and guided by a 'higher' Spirit:

The Big Boss up there, He wants to keep us safe [...]. He's invested in us as well as we're invested in Him. He's always looking over us (interview #17, Street Pastor).

The moment I step out into the street, it's gone. It's like being in a bubble, and that's incredible (interview #19, Street Pastor).

On the whole, you feel quite protected by the prayers being said and by the fact that you're in a team (interview #25, Street Pastor).

To put it in New Testament terms, Street Pastors dress in 'the armour of God', take on 'the shield of faith', and carry 'the helmet of salvation' (Ephesians 6; King James translation) to handle anything that could harm them. These 'anxiety-coping' qualities of religion are discussed further in the next chapter.

## **Concluding remarks**

The objective of this chapter was to categorise the tasks and duties that Street Pastors carry out. We distinguished four types of activities: crime and disorder prevention, information sharing, emotional labour, and prayer. Regarding the latter, my observations have not raised any doubts about Street Pastors trying to evangelise. They only talked about their faith and prayed when people insisted they did so, or displayed some curiosity about the pastors' backgrounds and motivations. The categories of 'crime and disorder prevention' (safety) and 'emotional labour' (care) flow into one another. Indeed, Street Pastors intuitively grasp that 'there is

something “good” in every form of care’ (Klaver & Baart, 2011: 687), a good which transcends notions of usefulness, efficiency and pleasure, as it aims to create interpersonal spaces of trust, attentiveness and reassurance for the pastors, the partygoers, and the night-life professionals alike. Specifically, the mechanism of ‘gesture’ (cf. ten Bos, 2011) – of physically conveyed social values, (self-) transformation, and the lack of a calculated goal – must be underlined here. By sparking conversations and spontaneously resorting to a body language of openness (a smile, a hug), Street Pastors help to foster communality and trust among people.

## Chapter 4: Street Pastors' motivations

*Prayer is in the organizational DNA of Street Pastors and is central to its identity* (Collins-Mayo, 2013: 186).

### Introduction

Street Pastors are extraordinary committed volunteers. They are not only ready to do the dirtiest kind of work: picking partygoers literally out of the gutter and cleaning the vomit off them; they also invest £300 in their gear and training or otherwise have a substantial amount of the sum donated by their churches. The question is 'why?' Why would you give free, even prepaid, help to drunks who have inflicted problems on themselves? As reviews of research on volunteering (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Wilson, 2012) suggest, understanding people's motivational bedrocks is a complicated undertaking. It is undoubtedly true that altruism and selflessness are important desires, but this should not neglect the very diverse antecedents, life courses and individual gains the volunteers may have. Given their varied ages, educations, professions, marital status and so on, Street Pastors are no anomaly; their motives scatter off in many different directions. However, Street Pastors share a deep spiritual unity in God, a spiritual dialogue partner who is 'before you, after you, over against you, behind you, next to you, above you, underneath you' (Buijs, 2012). Before going into greater depth about this, we first discuss 'personal enjoyments' and 'civic engagement' as sources of inspiration.

### Personal enjoyments

Going out on a Friday or Saturday night is more than helping drunken people and tempering aggressiveness. Street Pastoring can be genuine fun – the crowds, the neon lights, the buzz: 'What I particularly like about this job? The unknown. You never know where you going to and who you are going to help' (observation #2, 19 July 2014; informal chat with a Street Pastor). Besides, partygoers can do incredibly

humorous things, like dressing up as clowns, trying to see how many of them can get into a phone box, or proposing marriage to the Street Pastors:

Girl, tipsy: 'do you have shoes for me? I can't walk on my high heels anymore'  
– Street Pastors kneels down and puts a pair of pink flip-flops on her feet.

Girl: 'you're the nicest man I've ever met. Are you married? You are? Can I share you with your wife, then? Perhaps Mondays to Wednesdays?' – Street Pastor laughs. After the girl made a 'selfie' with the Street Pastor team she wanders off (observation #1, 12 July 2014).

Street Pastors are thus involved in the banter – joking with people, teasing them – of a night out. The other way round, partygoers and night-life professionals also interact with the pastors in affirmative ways. For example, realising that one of them adores live music, a doorman invited us to his club, where a rock concert was in session. We danced for almost five minutes in the doorway and hit the streets again (observation #4, 15 August 2014).

'Working in a team' was a second theme that continually reappeared in the interviews. Some Street Pastors have made friends because of their voluntary work. They saw their job as a perfect opportunity to meet people they would normally never have connected with: partygoers, police officers, door staff, taxi marshals, local entrepreneurs, and brothers and sisters from other Cardiff churches. It is an opportunity to spend six hours on the streets with others, offer practical assistance, and enjoy tête-à-têtes about life and faith. Third, respondents find satisfaction in helping people. Even though a lot of those people might be too intoxicated to remember being helped afterwards, 'doing the right thing' makes Street Pastors feel good. Yet, they hasten to stress, volunteering is not about personal gain, earning a badge, or self-praise. Street Pastors feel grateful for their ability to serve the community and be of as much use as they can.

Fourth, Street Pastoring represents a road through which people give a (renewed) meaning and purpose to their existence. For example, one respondent felt that he more or less owed his paid job to things he has learned from being a Street Pastor (interview #17, Street Pastor), while another said she had come on board after winding down her professional career (interview #2, Night-Base Team). Two interviewees who struggled with a troubled past openly declared:

The Street Pastors I have come across have accepted me for as I am now. [...] If I wasn't doing it, what would I be doing? Sitting on my backside in the house, watching the telly. [...] I get fellowship from the other guys. [...] It just opens up, if you like, a new world (interview #15, Night-Base Team).

What is stressful for me is the constant pressure of a job, which goes on everyday and gradually wears you down. Or another thing, which causes problems for me, is when I got too excited and push myself too hard. Street Pastoring is only one night per month. You are walking around; you have interactions with people. It is not constantly on the stressed situation. [...] That actually led to a breakdown. [...] Street Pastoring is sort of fulfilling for me [...]. It obviously helped to keep me stable (interview #25, Street Pastor).

So, as the citations above demonstrate, Street Pastors do not restrict their caring duties to the night-time economy. They also provide refuge and cheer for members of their own group as an (un-)intentional benefit to the outreach work they do for the 'down-and-outs' outside. The team is a like home for everyone who volunteers. People feel welcome, released and acknowledged. Again, such individual gains are not the sole explanation of why people have become Street Pastors and Night-Base workers, but it demonstrates how nice voluntary work can be in terms of wider life satisfaction: having fun, the reward of helping people, group camaraderie, and a boost to one's self-esteem.



## **Civic engagement**

‘Meeting the dire needs of vulnerable people’ is a further significant source of voluntary action among the Street Pastors. They see it as their moral obligation to serve the partygoers in a night-time economy governed by massive commercial interests. As such, respondents endorsed a more general apprehension about how Cardiff’s pub and club industry has developed over the past few decades. In the old days, drinking stopped early – the minute 10:00 pm struck somebody would ring a little bell, politely say ‘time please’, and that was the last round. Otherwise, the landlord risked losing his license. However, in an attempt to gentrify Cardiff’s town centre after years of economic decay as coal exports completely collapsed, the local government decided to deregulate the industry and now grants licensed premises longer selling hours, charging them money if they are open late at night. In effect, this policy has fuelled a long-standing drinking culture, as partygoers are increasingly seduced to buy beer, wine, and strong alcopops in a setting where ‘enjoying life to the max’ has become the norm. People have easy access to alcohol in bars and supermarkets, celebrate a ‘me culture’, and drink their sorrows away, whereby a proportion of them keep drinking until they are paralytic.

The media have picked on up this problem and have almost dehumanised it. The general public sees terrible representations of humanity, but there are no names, no ages, no faces. ‘It is a very clean picture’, an interviewee (interview #14, Street Pastor) clarifies, ‘so you can box people off, put them on a shelf and leave them there because they are disgusting’. Street Pastors take a completely opposite position. A few of them apologised for the mess Cardiff city centre can be at night, but kept on volunteering out of duty to the partygoers, drunk or not. Their work can therefore be interpreted ‘as a bringing of ordinary ethics into extraordinary situations’ (Cloke et al., 2007: 1095). Street Pastors offer time, emotional energy and human warmth to people as demonstrations of love, care and non-judgemental acceptance. They want to give something back to society.

In many instances, church members, friends and family already involved in Street Pastoring have asked respondents to join. Person-to-person advertisement is

an effective source of recruitment for the team. Additionally, Street Pastors may have been indirectly inspired by Christian-based activities, such as a brother and sister-in-law who work as missionaries in a third world country:

I don't think of myself like that, but what they're talking about, showing God's love, being present in your community, seemed very, very real to me (interview #23, Street Pastors).

A further motivational route to voluntarily reach out to society is sustained by individual histories. Such histories are cut across with both positive and negative undertones. One respondent explicitly referred to how he was raised:

My father was lazy, he never worked; we relied on my mother. My mother dropped dead at the age of forty-eight, leaving five kids. So, I then swore that I would never leave my own kids short. [...] My mother taught us to make an effort [...] And that's been brought up with me (interview #17, Street Pastors).

Others pass on their life experiences to younger generations as they 'have been there and done that' themselves. They carry an inner burden into their practices:

Then my life was such that I was a real heavy drinker – several kinds of beer, even a couple of bottles of wine every night of the week. [...] I was enjoying my life. All the beer I could drink. I went through a divorce. I'm married again. [...] But for the last 10 years I haven't drunk any alcohol. [...] It led me on to doing work with people with alcohol problems (interview #11, Street Pastor).

Being an active alcoholic, I was fortunate I didn't drink through the day, but the moment I finished work I was on it like a lunatic, just to get peace and serenity. [...] My husband banned me from going out, because I would black out and end up God knows where [...] I then stopped drinking [...]. What motivates me to be a Street Pastor? I am recognising something. [...] I have so much compassion for people who have wet themselves, lying in their own vomit... because that was me (interview #19, Street Pastor).

A common denominator in the Street Pastors' socially minded motivations is their readiness to give, see where they can be of benefit to society, and roll their sleeves up. Respondents think of themselves as part of a community, rather than isolated individuals, and share the conviction that helping vulnerable youth on a night out is a great priority. Many of the Street Pastors have school-age or adolescent children and, if not, they feel an obligation to care for people. Whoever they are looking after is someone's son or daughter, a valuable person in the Lord's eyes.

## **Faith as a key explanation**

Here we come to the root explanation underlying the numerous motivations that lead Street Pastors and their colleagues in the Night-Base to take on voluntary work. Faith is a crucial motive behind their willingness to reach out and is essential to understanding why they feel an inner drive to do what they do. Street Pastors identify themselves with a solid religious tradition, which presents a sense of unwavering truth 'more so than would be gained from other social identities' (Ysseldyk et al., 2010: 61). As various respondents elucidate:

My motivation is to share the love of God in me, [because] I know I am loved and accepted by Him (interview #8, Street Pastor).

I would describe Street Pastoring as 'a calling', because I feel passionate about it in my heart (interview #10, Street Pastor).

I felt that God is calling me to do something (interview #11, Street Pastor).

We feel God's love inside of us. That is what makes us Christians. [...] We are not doing it in our own strength. We are doing it in God's strength. God helps us (interview #13, Night-Base Team).

God has redeemed us, and it is because of that we want to help (interview #14, Street Pastor).

It is for my faith. [...] I want to pass on that message somehow, not through preaching, but by deeds, by acts (interview #23, Street Pastor).

The implication of this faith-based commitment is that Street Pastors do their volunteering explicitly as Christians. Nowadays, embracing such a religious identity as the veritable cradle of civic engagement raises suspicions of fundamentalism and hostility towards (secular) out-groups. Yet the Street Pastors demonstrate the opposite as their faith promotes pro-social behaviour towards anybody and everybody. They ask the rudimentary question 'what would Jesus do?' Wasn't it Jesus Christ Himself who hung out with prostitutes, drunkards, and tax collectors? Don't they deserve our love, care, and affection too? Aren't we all sinners, anyway? As such, Street Pastors practice the following of their Saviour in an incredibly literal and radical fashion.

Drawing their motivation from a 'religious capital' (Iannacone, 1990) has as a consequence that they envisage reality as enchanted. For Street Pastors, the city appears as a charming source of transcendent creation that lends things 'something of its own radiance'; people, events and happenings 'gain a special quality in the eye of the religious beholder' (van Harskamp, 2008: 13). So, for example, respondents pray about becoming volunteers, feel guided by God in their decisions, and act as

instruments of a Devine revelation. One Street Pastor spoke unconcernedly about 'miracles' or 'God instances' taking place in the night-time economy:

I see miracle after miracle after miracle. [...] We came across a man who was fast asleep and I was like: 'God, you're gonna have to help, because we can't carry this guy anywhere'. [...] I had his phone in my hand, which suddenly turned on and started ringing. So, I answered the phone and the man said: '[anonymised], where are you?' And I went: 'Hiya, I'm a Street Pastor, does [anonymised] look like this?' [...] 'Yeah, that's him', he replied, 'I'm by the Marriott' – which is from here to there. I said: 'Oh, look up, and wave your hand'. Then he came to us and rescued his friend. This kind of small miracles happen all through the shift (interview #19, Street Pastor).

In a more philosophical vein, the Street Pastors believe that life itself is not a given, but a gift; they live by virtue of grace and gratitude. That is to say, in their understanding, a benevolent God has created a world in such a manner that He (or She) loves people unconditionally, invites them to invest in human relationships, and, like Jesus Christ on the Cross, carry the burden of self-giving. Thus, Street Pastors feel actively encouraged by their faith to 'take the risk of putting themselves at stake' (cf. Gregersen, 2003) in generously solving problems as they come up during a night out.

## **Concluding remarks**

The motives of Street Pastors to voluntarily engage with partygoers and night-time professionals are multi-layered. On a personal level, going out on the streets or serving and praying back at the Night-Base brings them fun, friendship, and the satisfaction of caring for one another as human beings. Yet, such individual enjoyment ties in profoundly with a civic spirit that reflects social action towards vulnerable people. Street Pastors are active and responsible citizens who display concern about a youth-oriented pub and club culture plagued by disproportionate

drinking, violence, and the weakening of everyday social controls. On this deeper social level, their enthusiasm goes hand in hand with an unyielding guardianship instinct and a morally entrenched urge to 'do good' for society, whether out of individual past experiences, examples that others have set, or sheer altruism.

Finally, underpinning both personal enjoyment and civic engagement, Christian faith serves as the unifying narrative of why Street Pastors do what they do. Street Pastors abide by the central Christian message of God as love (*agape*) and renewal through the Gospel, which

constitutes the basis for the confidence that affords some motivation for caring about others in spite of our inclination to do the contrary (Grant, 1996: 18).

Christianity, after all, promises a heavenly extravagance of giving and reward, not by reaching for high goals and praise, but by a fair share of abandoning oneself and humbly 'being present' (cf. Baart, 2002) for (marginalised) people.



## Chapter 5: Impact of Street Pastors

*The description of modern societies as 'post-secular' refers to a change in consciousness. [...] In these societies, religion maintains a public influence and relevance, while the secularist certainty that religion will disappear worldwide in the course of modernisation is losing ground (Habermas, 2008: 20-21).*

### Introduction

Under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, British cities, Cardiff being no exception, have been granted the statutory obligation to form public-private partnerships with an orientation to intensified legal controls in the night-time economy. Consider, for example, the fines being issued for 'low-level' offences associated with alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour orders, and pub bans. Moreover, the 2003 Licensing Act serves as a legal instrument to specify how pubs and clubs should be run, to check compliances with alcohol sale regulations, and to allocate leading responsibilities to police and municipal agencies governing night-life (Hadfield et al., 2009). The church – i.e., the Street Pastors – comprises a third branch of this 'urban trinity' (Isaac & Davies 2009; 2014) as independent, but additional, support for partnership configurations between the local authorities and policing bodies, including members of the so-called 'police extended family' (Johnston, 2003).

In 2008, the Ascension Trust, represented by the Cardiff Street Pastors, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with South Wales Police about 'joined-up' working, mutual assistance, sharing non-sensitive information, risk assessments of on-street activities, and encouraging (young) adults to surrender illegal weapons or drugs to the pastors. In furtherance of the police practice, Street Pastors maintain ample contacts with paramedics, door staff, taxi marshals, partygoers, and members of the local churches enrolled in the project. The sections below cover the – unquantifiable – effect or impact they have on these stakeholders. Results indicate



that Street Pastors are exceptionally well trusted and respected as distinct partners in the governance of Cardiff's night-life. Such views rest on the perceptions of a small number of police, NHS and municipal respondents, the anecdotes Street Pastors tell, and my own observations, not on large-scale surveys. The opinions set out below must therefore be taken as indicative only.

## **On police**

As shepherds of the streets, Street Pastors cooperate closely with the police in Cardiff's city centre. Initially, police officers regarded the volunteers with some suspicion and were reluctant to work with them. They wondered whether those Christians weren't weird 'do-gooders' who would perhaps bring harm down on themselves. What if the police had constantly to bail them out of crisis situations? This would merely hinder their work. However, after breaking down a few barriers over the past six years, the Street Pastors have developed into an integral part of the community's safety partnership. They are now a broadly accepted 'node' (cf. Shearing, 2005) in Cardiff's night-life governance.

One explanation here is that partnership collaboration in Cardiff appears to be personality-driven. Representatives of the police and the Street Pastor director attend a number of separate meetings and regularly catch up with a larger number of stakeholders in the local night-time economy. Moreover, Cardiff's former police superintendent actively encouraged his force to utilise the Street Pastors' facilities and possibilities. However, partnership work is not only about personal relationships. Police scepticism and wariness have also been replaced by appreciation because the Street Pastors have proved themselves to be professional and thoroughly trained volunteers. They turn up every weekend (and for special events), they are not afraid of hard work, and they brief their partners in full. Consequently, to the police the Street Pastors represent a dedicated, consistent and reliable resource.

From an instrumentalist standpoint, respondents argue that the Street Pastors save the police energy and money by collecting broken glass (and thereby

managing weapons and waste) and having patience with vulnerable partygoers. Officers no longer need to 'babysit' drunks – let alone eventually arresting people, taking them into custody, filling out reports, and so on. Street Pastors can keep an eye on abandoned partygoers, while the police are free to deal with more troublesome problems. Police managers say:

The reality is that police officers spend a lot of time coping with very drunk individuals who are vulnerable. I'm not judgemental when I'm saying that. A lot of young people go out, they consume too much alcohol. [...] What police are able to do, instead of staying with a person, is to call the Street Pastors in. They would ask 'can you please look after him or her?' and go do something else (interview #3, Police).

When you think of so many incidents that we get on a Friday or Saturday night; all those confused people who are drunk and have lost their friends. Police are duty-bound to assist. We would tie up police officers sitting with people and waiting for an ambulance. [...] Street Pastors mellow things down, spend time with people... they have a great impact (interview #21, Police).

Street Pastors are at their best in taking care of vulnerable people. This absorbs much police time. [...] The current budget cuts make them even more valuable. To me, Street Pastors are a small, but critical, part of the partnership (interview #26, Police).

This 'package deal' between the police and the church kills two birds with one stone. On the one hand, because Street Pastors won't leave vulnerable people, they keep crime away. Potential offenders can't do horrible things to partygoers who are drunk and barely conscious. On the other hand, backed by the Street Pastors' assistance, the police are able to maintain their uniformed presence on the street, encourage

acceptable behaviour, and prevent offences. Respondents confirm that violent crime in Cardiff city centre has been on the decrease recently. However, it is difficult to attribute this trend to the Street Pastors and partnership approaches, because the method of recording crimes has been changed recently.

In addition, police officers repeatedly pop into the Tabernacle Welsh Church – the Street Pastors’ Night-Base – for a break, which saves them a lot of time. It is 10-15 minutes’ walk from the city centre to the central police station, whereas the church is around the corner from one of the city’s busiest pub and club areas. Nevertheless, most importantly, police officers like to visit the Night-Base Team for coffee, toast, and mental support. When coming into the church, officers do not necessarily seem all that happy to be at work. They get tired of intoxicated, abusive, and aggressive partygoers preventing them from doing ‘proper’ police work. For them, the Night-Base is an oasis of kindness and relaxation. This, in combination with the Street Pastors’ volunteering, results in heartfelt appreciation from operational police officers:

An off-duty police officer from Pontypridd walks up to the Street Pastors. He is wearing shorts, and carries a soft drink and a hamburger on his way to the train station. The man immediately begins to praise what the Street Pastors do. He extensively proclaims how much they support the force at night. In his view, no more than a small minority of all coppers display reluctance about the Street Pastors (observation #3, 1 August 2014).

If there is a downside to the Street Pastors’ efforts, it is that respondents wonder how to handle people who are ostensibly taking advantage of them. Consider the following feedback:

During the early part of the evening, our Night-Base Team answered the door to a police officer, who showed his warrant card and asked to come in. As soon as the door was opened it was apparent that the police officer was off-duty and rather drunk after a works night out. He used the toilet facilities, asked for food (we politely told him 'no') and left (SP report, 6 December 2013).

Street Pastors are happy to do their bit for society, but they feel uncomfortable when people try to stretch their boundaries. We shall return to this complaint when we discuss the partygoers' attitudes to them.

### **On paramedics, door staff, and taxi marshals**

Similar to the police, paramedics had their reservations about the Street Pastors. Quite possibly because St. John's ambulance is a charity branch of the health services, they felt themselves drawn into competition with a new group of volunteers. In general, paramedics stirred up animosity to the responsibilities the Street Pastors took on. Weren't they at risk of seeing partygoers who were unwell without being able to treat them correctly? Wouldn't the Street Pastors make serious mistakes? This attitude has changed. Today, paramedics and nurses compliment the Street Pastors for saving them time and money by sitting on the curb beside vulnerable partygoers, giving them water, and saving them a trip to hospital. Furthermore, if drunken people are amenable to medical attention, the Street Pastors free up ambulance crews by walking patients up to the ATC in a wheelchair. Several of the pastors have had first-aid training, which makes the team even more sophisticated. NHS-affiliated respondents state that:

Street Pastors are doing a fantastic job. In fact, the night-time environment is a lot safer because of them. I mean, first-hand experience, they've found guys semi-naked behind bins at the train station in the middle of the winter. Those people would have died of hypothermia, or at least suffered from

hypothermia, had they not been found. Street Pastors know where to look, where to squirrel people out. There will always be people coming to the hospital, being injured, but the Street Pastors reduce that number – I am sure (interview #7; researcher).

Street Pastors are brilliant. They are very sensible in their decision making. If they have any doubts whatsoever, they bring partygoers in. [...] We have a really good relationship with them. They can ring the treatment centre and ask for us. [...] They have always been careful, and we are pleased with that (interview #22; nurse).

In contrast to the police, paramedics don't normally visit the Night-Base Team. They stay alert in their vans or at the ATC.

Likewise, door staff don't abandon their posts. Either the Street Pastors stop at their premises for a quick chat or door staff ask them to assist with a problem. The Street Pastor director has made a point of meeting with the owners of the pubs, clubs and restaurants, ensuring that worthwhile relations could be built. This has definitely been effective, as door staff repeatedly request the pastors' help:

The door staff ask the Street Pastors to attend a person. [...] They may find a drunken girl inside the premises and take her to the ATC. So, you know, you see good cooperation there. Street Pastors can traverse the city centre quickly (interview #4, Borough Council).

One door staff I remember called us one night and said: 'there is a young lady who has just left one of the clubs, a guy has stopped in a car, he's trying to get her in, and she is too drunk to know what is happening. I don't think they know each other. Can you come over?' We went along, were able to protect the girl, and stayed with her so the door staff could go back to what he needed to do (interview #9, Street Pastor).

The same story of saving resources, cheering up professionals and, in the end, making partygoers safe can be told for the taxi marshals controlling queues of waiting vehicles on the edges of Cardiff's inner city. They come to the Night-Base for a snack and connect with the Street Pastors if drunken people are staggering around the taxi ranks for ages. Partygoers can be so intoxicated that drivers refuse to take them.

## **On partygoers**

Although Street Pastors are too few to claim they have changed the atmosphere in town, their presence doesn't go unnoticed. Partygoers, it seems, treat them as a non-threatening part of the furniture. While fully-fledged police officers and sturdy door staff might inflame aggression, one can assume that the pastors' 'public familiarity', personified in (not always) brief encounters with those in need, gives partygoers 'a sense of home and safety instead of distance and fear' (Binken & Blokland, 2012: 297). As a natural by-product of their interactions with people, Street Pastors may even encourage 'convivial' (cf. Hinchliffe & Whatmore, 2006) manners among them.

Respondents did express that, hypothetically speaking, by confronting partygoers with voluntary work, the pastors have an effect in enhancing their moral consciousness and attitude:

Partygoers may be aware of somebody who is quite stressed and try to find a Street Pastor to go and help that person. [...] I think there is almost a psychological change in people witnessing us (interview #1, Night-Base Team).

Partygoers might think 'if we're putting these volunteers through all this trouble, we won't get so drunk next time'. Maybe they are thoughtful about that (interview #25, Street Pastor).

Yet it remains debatable whether partygoers do indeed behave that rationally. On the other hand, as a study of personal encounters with perceived goodness reveals, altruistic volunteers arguably inspire positive processes. By meeting role models who are giving without asking, (adolescent) people perhaps shift their view of the world as an essentially self-centred battlefield and change their behaviour accordingly (Ronel, 2006). At a minimum, Street Pastors appear to alter the ambiance and vibrancy in (hostile) situations. They distract partygoers whose senses are slightly dulled, treating them compassionately, and so avoid things getting out of hand.

Indubitably, the Street Pastor save disoriented partygoers from emotionally disturbing occurrences. They protect them from assaults and, taken as a group, they break the 'criminal spin' (Ronel, 2013) that accompanies public drunkenness. It is much less traumatic when the police don't have to lock up young people, give them a criminal record, and inform their upset parents. In line with Shearing & Marks, while the police

are an agency that is responsible for and accountable for ensuring safety outcomes, they are not necessarily the agency that is best placed to generate these outcomes across all contexts (2011: 213).

By adhering to the universal human desire to be loved and cared for, Street Pastors repair impending harm through their social interventions. From their side, the partygoers, and sometimes also their friends and family, send their appreciation to the Street Pastor coordinator, who regularly receives gracious e-mails; people can be over the moon that their nearest and dearest have been kept out of trouble. If partygoers try to pay for the water, flip-flops or space blankets they have received, the Street Pastors kindly refer them to the Ignite website, where they can make a donation.

Sadly, not every person responds well. Returning to a point made in Chapter 2, however noble their selfless art of giving might be, Street Pastors run the risk of being used and abused. As has been noted in one of the debriefing reports: 'she shouted and swore at us, demanding slippers and telling us we were \*\*\*\*, unlike the Street Pastors in Redditch who'd give you anything you asked for' (SP report, 14 September 2014). This concern also echoes in the interviews:

The Street Pastors' principle is to keep people who are in the city centre safe. So, if it is a partygoer you do it that way. If it is a homeless person, you try to help. [...] But, by the nature of how they live, homeless people sometimes tell you stories that are not quite true. You can't be naïve (interview #1, Night-Base Team).

I can't generally say it, but some of the Street Pastors are a bit naïve on it. People come demanding water this or flip-flops that. But is there anything wrong? Are people capable of walking? If people have money in their pockets, there are shops open in town. [...] You have to balance it out: do we want to give flip-flops, water or a bar of chocolate to every person we see? What is that achieving? What are people learning? (interview #17, Street Pastor).

According to this latter respondent, giving must be entwined with education. For example, Street Pastors should teach the girls not to wear those high heels or, at least, take a pair of comfy shoes with them. You can't always fall back on someone else's goodwill.



## On local churches

The Street Pastors have a dual impact on their churches. Looking from the inside out, as an interdenominational movement, the pastors seem to open a constructive dialogue between local congregations and varied strands of Christian faith. They share testimonies, break the bars of narrow-mindedness, and draw fragmented denominations together around the awareness of social action. Hence, consistent with the work done by diaconates, food banks and soup kitchens, Street Pastors expose the congregants to society. They stir their congregation members to be 'salt and light' beyond the church walls and branch out into the city:

Church is not about going into a freezing cold building, singing songs, and listening to a guy mumbling on for twenty minutes, half an hour. Church is about relationship (interview #20, Street Pastor).

What is more, for quite a number of Street Pastors their volunteer work is the activity they feel above all else that God has called them to. It has revolutionised their lives. When people feel so fulfilled, they are presumably more active in their faith, gather people around them, and attract them to voluntary activity.

Looking from the outside in, Street Pastors break through negative stereotypes about Christianity. Through them the general public gets the opportunity to see Christians as ordinary, down-to-earth, approachable, even nice people. What the Street Pastors advocate, of course, is highly visible:

I think that people I speak to, who are not Christians, have a great deal of affection for their work. Because it is difficult to imagine a more challenging environment for a Christian organisation to work in than a city centre on Friday or Saturday night, with large numbers of people under the influence of alcohol. [...] Street Pastors enjoy a respect that other good work in churches does not necessarily get. A lot of good work isn't seen (interview #3, Police).

By being right on the spot, Street Pastors puzzle partygoers. Many people are surprised due to their ignorance of the church's involvement in society, especially in the night-time economy. As a result, such people will probably talk to their friends and families about the Street Pastors, who, in turn, will spread the stories around England & Wales (and overseas). 'Doing good' creates a ripple effect; it is like sowing tiny mustard seeds that will always blossom somewhere.

## **Concluding remarks**

After some preliminary hesitation, the Street Pastors have been enthusiastically incorporated within Cardiff's night-time economy partnership. They are currently dealing with some 100 incidents each month, pick up dozens of glass bottles, and hand out stacks of items to people, all of which is a sizeable achievement, considering there are only two small teams of volunteers available on Friday and Saturday nights. Along with the fact that volunteers are pastors, not preachers, it is this reputation that has won over the police, the NHS, and the Municipal Council. Keeping up their terrific image is of vital importance to the Street Pastors to continue serving the city. The director and coordinator, in particular, are responsible for not marring the scheme's fidelity. They must continue to commission decent people, keep an eye on their routines, and network with Cardiff's movers and shakers.

The availability of long-term finances is a second critical asset for the Street Pastors. There is no guaranteed government or police subsidy, so they try to collect the £50,000 needed to run the project every year through co-funding. Up to now, the Street Pastors have managed to gain gifts from businesses, the pub and club industry, and individual sympathisers, but they need future sponsorship to sustain their accomplishments. In 2011, the scheme was due to run its last patrol in Cardiff as venture capital from the Home Office Crime Reduction Unit had dried up and further funding streams were cut following a round of public savings. The pastors survived thanks to the intervention of a generous anonymous donor.

If there is any criticism of the Street Pastors it comes from within. Four respondents (interview #1, Night-Base Team; interviews #17, #23, #24, Street Pastors) wondered whether they weren't a source of easy revenue to the city. A few partygoers try to get the most out of their encounters with the Street Pastors: 'there have been occasions that you get a little exploited if people know you carry things' (interview #23, Street Pastors). Shouldn't Street Pastors be more insistent in not offering water, candy bars, and flip-flops to people who are still sober? Shouldn't they act with more vigour, instructing people about what is appropriate behaviour? Can't the Street Pastors and their parental 'safety net' be misused as an excuse for or legitimization of misconduct?

Alternatively, Street Pastors also try to get their head around how their initiative relates to Britain's Big Society agenda. Street Pastoring, coincidentally, fits in well with a policy that encourages the 'third sector' to take on responsibility for care and safety in society. In sociological jargon, it empowers a 'moral order' (Jordan, 2012) in which citizens, charities, and churches are bound to prosper. This ideal sounds compassionate, but there is a fly in the ointment. Doesn't the government's plea for performing voluntary work validate cost savings? Don't the Street Pastors, as cheap 'police officers', enable public authorities to discharge paid professionals? And is that right? Or are Street Pastors privileged volunteers who should aid people, no matter what? Because there are no unequivocal answers to such questions, they might be worth wider debate.

## Chapter 6: Summary, conclusions and reflection

*While the Street Pastors are very keen to distance themselves from preaching to people in the night-time economy, they are drawing attention to their faith simply by being on the streets (Johns et al., 2009b: 51).*

### Introduction

The ambition of this study was to discover the ways in which the Street Pastors' behaviours and motivations contribute to moving people on a night out into positive endeavours, and how professionals and partygoers sense their work. These closing pages summarise the results by providing answers to the research questions, and attempt to deduce theoretical insights from the case study about how religion makes a worthy contribution to Western society.

### Answering the research questions

The study consisted of four research questions, which can be answered succinctly:

#### ***How are the Street Pastors organised?***

The Cardiff Street Pastors scheme features three organisational pillars:

- *Ascension Trust*, the nation-wide umbrella organisation under which the local scheme operates. The trust oversees the scheme, facilitates locally defined education and training programmes, and sets out quality standards for the Street Pastors' clothing and operational procedures;
- An intermediate *management and coordination board* that specifies policy directions, networks with stakeholders, raises funds, organises monthly team rotas, enables training and education sessions, keeps Street Pastors accountable through weekly reports, and responds to special requests from inside and outside the team;

- An on-the-ground *Night-Base Team*, whose volunteers support Street Pastors, police officers and other night-time professionals with refreshments, conversations, and prayers.

### ***What do Street Pastors do during a night out?***

The research arrives at four categories:

- *Crime and disorder prevention*: (1) collecting broken glass, (2) providing informal guardianship, and (3) diffusing aggression by partygoers;
- *Information sharing*: intelligence gathering for, and offering advice to the police, the NHS, and the City Council as spin-offs of their primary caring role. Street Pastors also assist visitors to the city centre with directions;
- *Performing emotional labour*: (1) having conversations with people, (2) giving them water, candy bars, flip-flops, and the like, and (3) affording practical help such as putting an arm around somebody, covering people's modesty, and trying to call his/her friends or family, and (4) delivering interventions in the form of first aid, wheeling people to a the ATC or alerting the emergency services;
- *Praying* before, during and after the shifts, either in the Night-Base or on the streets.

### ***Why do people volunteer as Street Pastors?***

The motivations underlying the Street Pastor's volunteering are threefold:

- *Personal enjoyments*: (1) fun and banter, (2) the delights of teamwork, (3) the reward of helping people, and (4) increased self-esteem;
- *Civic engagement*: concerns about intoxicated and vulnerable (young) people on a night out, and the willingness to take care of them;
- *Christian faith*: their belief in a merciful God is the foundational meaning and purpose for the Street Pastors doing what they do.

### ***What impact do Street Pastors have on the night-time economy?***

The Street Pastors are recognised as highly valued partners in the night-time economy for the following reasons:

- They are likely to *prevent crime and disorder* in Cardiff city centre;
- They bring *calmness* to intoxicated partygoers and attempt to shield them from the traumatic experience of being arrested;
- They *free up time and money* for police officers, paramedics, door staff and taxi marshals;
- They provide on-site, low-level *mental coaching* for (cynical) police officers – ‘we hate “baby-sitting” with drunks’ – and other night-life personnel;
- They might *set a good example* for people (churchgoers or not) to voluntarily reach out to social problems.

Ensuring an upright reputation and extended funding are essential for developing the scheme’s partnership position in the future. Insofar as hesitations arose about the team, the Street Pastors themselves had to struggle with questions like ‘aren’t we a “soft touch” for demanding partygoers?’ and ‘don’t we represent a “cheap alternative” for paid professionals in times of austerity?’ Both questions invite an open exchange of views among the pastors.

### **Living by love**

Sociologists, in general, have a remarkably powerful appetite for gloomy worldviews and cultural pessimism. Most famously, Putnam (2000), in his North-American based book, has delivered an abundance of empirical evidence for the collapse of political and religious participation, voluntary work, philanthropy, family structures, connections in the workplace, and supplementary negative indicators that have destroyed people’s ties of mutuality and solidarity. As has been convincingly asserted in previous studies (Collins-Mayo et al., 2012; Green & Johns, 2011; Johns

et al., 2009b), Street Pastors tend to rebuild this 'stock' of trust and solidarity. They have been accepted in the public domain without noteworthy resistance, and are likely to have a unifying effect on people.

However, such findings are not only relevant within the confined setting of British night-life. In fact, the night-time economy represents a condensed micro-cosmos, a hyperbolic metaphor, of what is happening in Western secular societies as a whole. Key to these societies is a type of individualism that is no longer checked by Christian and Humanistic idioms of personal obligations and responsibilities to God, civil society, and the common good. We are travelling light and 'liquid' (cf. Bauman, 2000) with our families, communities, and companion citizens in an epoch of unparalleled freedoms and yet omnipresent risks and fears. Knowing who we are and where we belong – our personal identities – have been increasingly dictated by a market-oriented spirit with no steadfast reference points. What, then, can religiously inspired groups like the Street Pastors still teach us, secular people, in taking a critical position on the individualisation of social life?

It is important to note from the outset that one should not take the notion of a 'secular society' as synonymous for a vast decline in church membership. Nor does it mean that religion and faith are fading away in the Western world. As we have seen in this report, religiously laden civic engagement appears to be amazingly well-received. Secularisation as understood here refers to a transformation of peoples' immanent frame, their social imagery, from which they see and interpret reality. That is, cultural conditions in the West have changed in favour of an individualist self-understanding (a 'buffered self') and, subsequently, a disenchanted moral order made up of atomistic agents who make their own choices (Taylor, 2007). Believing in God has become just one option among many in our pluralist, if not polarised, era. Nevertheless, Habermas' comprehension that we have slipped into a '*post-secular*' society (2006; 2008) might signal a change in mentality and a renewed openness to the value of religious heritages.

## ***Civic friendship***

At this point, I would like to commence and reinterpret the philosophical idea of ‘civic friendship’ (cf. Woldring, 1994). From their origin, disputes about what civic friendship is have circled around the normative query ‘how to preserve a morally coherent life’, which concerns the conceivable links between individual character – ‘the kind of people we are’ – and the state of our society (Bellah et al., 2008 [1985]: xlvii). Civic friendship must henceforth not be conflated with private friendship: the intimate personal bonds people have. On the contrary, it presupposes that citizens will pursue ‘moral excellence’ – in modern-day vocabulary: sacrificing ‘short-term self-interest for the long-run self-interest that the community as a whole shares’ (Scorza, 2013: 776) – without necessarily knowing one another. Civic friendship is about promoting the ‘ultimate good’ for the sake of a fellow, but not closely acquainted, human being.

Theories of civic friendship, which go back to the ancient philosopher Aristotle, are not uncontested. Aside from interpretational issues, classical Athens cannot be compared with today’s democracies, as, for the Greeks, women, slaves and the foreign-born were not entitled to citizens’ rights. Our conventions about citizenship and civic friendship are thus anachronistic to Aristotle’s original ethical thought (Hope, 2013). This thought may come closest to the broad concept of *philia*: the love and friendship between parents and children, comrades, spouses, and siblings (Schwarzenbach, 1996). Again, it is extremely implausible that this conventional understanding of bestowing commitment on ‘cohesive communities’ can be applied to upholding pluralistic and individualistic societies like ours.

Therefore, we should not take the idea of civic friendship too literally. Civic friendship must instead be taken as a disposition – as a matter of character and virtue (cf. MacIntyre, 2007 [1981]) – that sustains practices, and enables people to remain firm in their quest for moral excellence. From a Christian stance, as the Street Pastors endorse, unconditional love is the most powerful source of human existence and transformation. This love is more than a remote outcome of salvation in heaven; it is instead a concrete, action-oriented quality internal to living the good



life. Note that the love as intended here neither fully covers Aristotelian affections among family and friends (*philia*), nor does it appeal to romantic love or sexual desires (*eros*). In their place, the love pictured by the Street Pastors epitomises *agape*: a Divine flow of mercy directed at people's flourishing (Buijs, 2003; Grant, 1996). Owing to His (or Her) recognition and endorsement of each of us individually, people can love each other as equals. It is exactly this notion that is explicated in Christian charity.

### ***Constitutive paradoxes***

As stressed before, my goal is not to celebrate Christianity's moral standards, but to unravel what faith has to offer to Western societies dictated to by individual life projects, rational economic decision-making, and evaporating social connectedness. What does 'Christian liberalism' (Siedentop, 2014) – the tolerant belief that everybody counts and has free agency over his or her life – have in store for building inclusive and socially sustainable human relationships? Drawing on the idea of civic friendship as embodied by the Street Pastors, we arrive at three constitutive paradoxes that explain how they restore sensations of trust and communality in society.

First, in contradiction to the prejudice that religion and faith are about the creation of cosy enclaves, the Street Pastors apply a risk-taking attitude to their social environment. Paradoxically, their 'orthodox' religious certitude of being safe (and saved) in Christ gives them the strength to step out of their churches, face the unknown, and feel compassion for their neighbours. It is not from ambiguity and ambivalence, but from a firmly anchored identity – shaped through narratives, rituals, and traditions – that they get the courage to act in a beneficial, trust-building mode.

Second, contrary to the management of public drunkenness and crime through severe disciplinary mechanisms, the Street Pastors resort to mildness. Paradoxically, most partygoers automatically correct themselves when meeting these volunteers who, shorn of carrying a big stick, radiate trust and positivity.

Despite political fixations with behavioural contracts, surveillance and law enforcement, the Street Pastors' hallmarks are generosity and goodwill. If it were to lose such gifts of grace, society has to fear for its own moral, community-binding foundations.

Finally, contra contemporary obsessions with targets, statistics and scores, Street Pastors have gained success by not expecting too much. Paradoxically, through their cultivation of an empathic and caring approach devoid of directly measurable results, partygoers and night-life professionals alike have developed a profound appreciation for the project. Currently, Street Pastors are cherished characters who do not seek to evangelise people, and present their work as open-ended. Against tumbling into the illusion of 'social engineering', there is great wisdom in admitting that many social problems are far from straightforward to correct, and so merit continuous improvisation. Keeping confidence in the future is what really counts in bolstering the social fabric of society.



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